1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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411 or the weapon is used to peck the face of his opponent. This club is used very little, the flat-bladed type being preferred.

The flat-bladed type of club is normally about fifty-four inches in length, but varies from a minimum of fifty inches to a maximum of over fifty-six inches. It is three and one-half to four and one-half inches wide, and from one-half to three-quarters of an inch in thickness. It is made of ironwood and weighs between three or four pounds. The upper and lower sides of the blade are convex and taper to two knife-like edges which end in a sharp point. The shaft is only about two and a quarter inches wide. The plain butt end of the shaft distinguishes the first subtype. The second subtype has an incision of about three-quarters of an inch at the butt end [531] of the shaft to represent the tail of a fish. Both subtypes are painted with red ocher and occasionally covered with geometric designs.

The flat-bladed type of club is used only in hand-to-hand encounters. A man's opponent is struck with the knife-like edge. The blow is usually directed at the head. Men generally use them, but women also use them occasionally to help their male relatives in a fight. It is not considered a woman's weapon.

A woman's yam stick is also used as a club by a man who finds himself without a hitting weapon during a camp brawl.

These northeastern Arnhem Land people have no shields with which to defend themselves against club or spear. The club itself is usually used as a parrying stick, just as the spear-thrower is used against the spear.

Boomerangs

The boomerang, which is usually thought of as a weapon characteristic of Australia, is not used as a throwing instrument in this area, except in the southern regions. Its only function in the northern clans is to beat time in certain of the ceremonies. In the south it is never used for hunting, and seldom for fighting. I saw several scores of fights and a large number of makarata (duels), but only once did I see a boomerang used and this by some people who had come from the far interior.

4. Canoes and Tools for Sailing Them

●396 *Bark Canoe* (*buer-warn*).—The initial step in constructing a bark canoe is to cut the bark of a eucalyptus tree first around the bottom of the trunk and then at the top, split it down the center, and remove it as for house building. The outer surface is then cleaned and straightened, usually with the aid of a spear head used as a knife or with a stone hatchet.

The bark is then held in a fire and further straightened. It is next shaped so that the inner side of the bark becomes the outside of the canoe. This is done by putting two logs on each side of the fire and using them as wedges to push the bark into shape. The bark is creased down the center to form a wedge-shaped canoe. The ends are then sewn with a

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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heavy grass-fiber string. A slight cut is made across the inner surface of the canoe at stern and bow, to enable the builder to bend the ends to sharp points so that they can be properly sewn together. 396

Two pliable green poles are put along the gunwales and lashed to them with grass fiber to strengthen the craft. Four cross-pieces are inserted to keep the sides from collapsing. The sides are pulled together with bark string rope; this prevents their spreading and spoiling the shape of the canoe. The whole structure takes a short time to make; no manufactured material is needed, since the string is only a tough grass that has been split.

The bark canoe was used before the dugout for hunting turtle and sea animals, but now is never used for a harpooning expedition.

Dugout Canoe.—The material for a dugout canoe is always a soft wood. The larger paper barks (Melaleuca) and certain types of the fig tree, as well as other trees with large trunks and soft wood, are used. All of these trees are very scarce in northeastern Arnhem Land and are highly prized by the natives. They always belong to a clan, since they are a part of a clan's territory. [423]

A dugout canoe ranges from twelve to twenty-six feet in length and has a beam of two to three feet. The average length of a canoe is eighteen feet. An ordinary canoe will seat from four to fourteen people. The seats are so arranged that two men sit side by side. Projections are left on the inner sides of the canoes and flat slabs of hard wood are put across to form the seats. One such board has a hole bored in it for the mast. A raised place is also left in the bottom of the boat, in which a socket is made for the mast end.

Sails of pandanus (see page 461) and paddles are used by the natives to propel the dugout canoe. A paddle is also used for a rudder. A three-ply rope with a stone attached to it is tied to a hole bored in the stern of the boat and used for an anchor. The stone also serves as ballast. Bailers are made of melon shells.

The major part of the work on a canoe is done on the spot where the tree has been felled. The chief tool is now the iron tomahawk instead of the stone axe—in fact, it is doubtful if the stone axe is ever used for making dugout canoes, since these canoes are a Malay contribution, and in all likelihood the Murngin learned how to make the dugout under the supervision of the Malays, who were using iron axes and who introduced this tool among the Murngin.

The boat is roughly shaped for hollowing out and is then carried by a group of men to a nearby stream. It is placed in the water to test its equilibrium and to balance it finally. Water is poured inside it until it is thoroughly soaked; then a fire is made in it so that the whole surface is charred and thoroughly steamed. The outside of the boat is also fired and slightly charred. After steaming, planks are put inside to push the two sides farther apart and thereby widen the beam.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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396 The natives then go over the boat with their iron hatchets, chop away any of the burned material and smooth the surface. The sides of the canoe are chipped on the inside as well as the outside. They are approximately an inch to an inch and a half thick along the gunwales and to about half way down, where they gradually increase in thickness. The bottom of the boat is from three to three and a half inches thick. The bow and stern also increase in thickness. It is impossible to tell one end from the other until a hole has been made in the stern for the anchor rope. The outside of the bottom of the boat is rounded and has no keel. There is no carving of any kind on any of the Murngin canoes.

The mast, from six to eight feet in height, is a sapling that has been barked. A notch is made at its top for tying the ropes of the sail.

501 177 Although some of the older men know what an outrigger is, as was demonstrated to the writer by drawings on the sand, no canoe in the area is ever fitted with one. The natives all insisted they never used them. It is impossible to state definitely the reasons for the natives of northeastern Arnhem Land not taking over the outrigger; the only reason given by them was that the canoe did not need it, and it was just as good without one. It is possible that their resistance to cultural traits generally, and particularly to any trait that causes extra labor, explains their lack of appreciation of the outrigger. Until the introduction of the dugout they had been using a bark canoe which did not possess the outrigger, and it is likely that their old pattern of behavior had such a strong hold upon them that the outrigger was not adopted.

501 In the interior part of the Murngin country the people do not possess boats of any description but use a specially constructed bark bundle, large enough to support one or two individuals, as a raft to cross streams. This type of raft is also used when the men wish to fish in the middle of a stream.

Paddles.—Paddles are made from light wood, usually stringy bark. The blade is roughly oblong in shape; and although the handle and blade are of one piece, the division between the two is indicated either by a sharp flare of the blade from the handle, or, rarely, by the top of the blade forming a right angle with the handle.

Paddles usually are five to five and one-half feet long, with the blade about two feet and the handle three. The blade width has about a four-inch norm. The handle is carved in the form of a cylinder. Sometimes the end of the handle has a square knob for a hand hold. The top and bottom of the blade are convex; the edges of the blades are very thin.

One type of blade tapers at the distal end, whereas the other has a squared end. Although the paints dissolve immediately in water, the natives often paint their paddles for the mere pleasure of decorating them and seeing their beauty. [531]

Not every man is skilled in weaving *bäti* (baskets), of which many types are recognised, each with its own name and each made for a specific purpose. A man with special skill in weaving becomes known, but he is called merely *koŋ mainmäk*, a "good hand". Such a man may acquire some local renown and receive substantial payments (*baka bäkmärämma*) in return for his work, but again, this is a tribute to, and an acknowledgement of, the *marr* of the master craftsman, the prestige he brings, rather than "payment" for his activities, his craftsmanship. But it shows the beginnings of the recognition of craft specialisation, the *virtu* of special skill in craftsmanship.

But in the case of the *lippa lippa*, the wooden dugout canoes, which may exceed 24 feet in length and may be capable of carrying upwards of six to eight men on sailing

to use these stingray spines is the prerogative of these clans only and is jealously guarded.

Again, the fine appearance and balance of a spear is not always a gauge of its worth. I once remarked to an informant, Raiwälla, of a spear shaft, that it was crooked and twisted, and the spear not of much value. But he corrected me quickly and pointed out that as the shaft was crooked the spear was not "flash" and was therefore more likely to fly straight to its mark. Such a remark is enlightening, because it stresses at once the great difference in the way in which the white man and the Arnhemlander look at even so simple an artefact as a spear. To the white man, a wooden shaft is of good or indifferent craftsmanship, but the native attributes personality to it. Its very appearance may be deceptive. It may possess *marr* from its background and association. For this reason a native may place great value upon spears received within the ceremonial exchange cycle, from areas renowned for weapons of a certain type, although to the eye of the white man they may appear to be inferior to those which he makes for himself. The native recognises the prestige (the *marr*) of the master craftsman. By their associations certain *gerri* possess *marr*, and they have therefore a vastly enhanced *psychological* value as fighting or hunting weapons.

[396] voyages in the open sea, the matter is different. These craft 501 are hollowed out of a single tree. They have no keels, but are quite smooth underneath, and today are built without outriggers (although these are said to have been used by the Macassars), and depend for their safety and stability as much on the skill employed in their manufacture as in [435] the seamanship of their crews. These *lippa lippa* are unlike any other element of material culture and are valued greatly. 173 The natives say that in former times the Macassar voyagers 439 brought these craft to Arnhem Land each season in their 648 praus and that a prau carried as many as eight or ten *lippa* 501 *lippa*. When the time came for their departure, the Macassar men presented the canoes to the natives as part of their farewell payment, and this became a ceremonial occasion.

177 Before the coming of the Indonesian voyagers the natives 501 used only bark canoes,[29] called *bärwän*, and swimming logs, [396] and it was only after the introduction by the Macassars of the *lippa lippa*, together with iron tools for cutting it, that the Arnhem Land people began making wooden canoes for themselves. Much labour is involved in the cutting of a big canoe, and none of the tools formerly used by the natives of Arnhem Land would have been fitted for [412] this work. Although they possessed stone axes and shell scrapers, they lacked such tools as the fine, strong, relatively efficient adzes made from shell such as were used by the sea-faring peoples of Cape York Peninsula. This fact, and the way in which the wooden canoe was introduced, as well as its association with the Macassar voyagers, has given the *lippa lippa* a special place in Arnhem Land culture. But

[314] [29] The bark used is that of *Eucalyptus tetrodonta*, one of the "stringybarks", which is much used in technology. In addition to the manufacture of canoes, it serves for the roofing of houses and for the manufacture of certain vessels used for carrying water, as well as in the preparation of food.

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
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it must be remembered that the *lippa lippa* and the iron tools for cutting them were part of the pattern of Indonesian culture adopted by these people from the Macassar voyagers.

In the case of the bark canoe, while a good deal of skill and experience was needed in making the craft, the actual time involved amounted to a few hours only. A man was generally assisted in stripping the sheet of stringybark,[30] and in the heating and folding of this, by his wife or other near kin, and no special organisation was necessary to feed him, or to relieve him of the need to hunt, over a period of weeks. But with the building of a big sea-going dugout canoe the matter is different and a considerable amount of organisation is necessary to build and launch the craft.

Today there are three principal means of obtaining *lippa lippa*. The first is as a gift of the kind called *tadoit* (pages 40-41), to send back the *marr* after a *ŋarra* or other ceremony, a means, however, which is uncertain because it cannot be solicited. Of the other and more direct methods of obtaining canoes, *täkkäl koŋ gurrupän*, (p. 52) is probably the most favoured, while straight-out purchase (*mälli*) (pp. 51-52), in which the *djalimulimo* or *djärtunmirri* is directly engaged to carry out the work, is used less frequently. My informants said that the *djalimulimo* feeds himself during the progress of the work. This means that he must either spend a considerable part of his time in hunting or fishing or that he must depend upon his wives or other female kin to feed him in the period during which he is actually cutting the canoe. More rarely, responsibility for feed-

[30] Although most of these bark canoes, even those which are about 14 or 15 feet in length, are constructed from a single sheet of bark, some, especially in the Gulf of Carpentaria, are made from two or more sheets sewn together.

MORE RARELY, RESPONSIBILITY FOR FEED-
[465] ing the canoe-maker is assured by the man for whom the
396 work is undertaken. He is paid finally in *gerri*, such as bundles
431
437 of spears, baskets and tomahawks, which again take the form of "goodwill" (*ŋoi ŋämmatirri*) presents rather than payments calculated on the basis of exact economic equivalence. In these transactions, a bargain is rarely struck; the *djärtunmirri* is flattered by the request for his services to cut the canoe, and the *buŋgauwa lippa lippa*, the owner or master of the canoe, seeks to please the craftsman by making liberal gifts to ensure that the *djärtunmirri* is satisfied at
[152] the end of the transaction. For he knows that a man who
[578] harbours resentment will rarely declare this openly, but
[754] that he is likely to brood over it and eventually to seek the aid of a medicine man or sorcerer to avenge the wrong, real or imaginary. Even in this case, to which the name *mälli* is applied, the transaction is far removed from the level of simple purchase. But a big advance has been made in the recognition of craft specialisation and the idea of payment for the work of the specialist.

313 The responsibility of the owner, *buŋgauwa* (literally
396 master) of the canoe, does not end here. A suitable canoe tree is hard to find and he may be obliged to select a tree some distance from river or sea, and to manhandle the heavy craft on rollers cut for the purpose.

431 The handling and launching of a new canoe is a big
476 ceremonial occasion, and in consequence, a presentation of
396 food is expected of the *buŋgauwa* as a gesture of goodwill to those who assist in the launching of the craft. This again entails work and organisation, and above all, the co-operation of numbers of people, including women, with divergent interests, the whole forming part of an intricate and nicely balanced system of obligation and counter obligation, of gift and counter gift.